

Dear Chairman Powell,

According to a newspaper article in our paper today, I understand that the Federal Communications Commission is scheduled to vote Monday on easing regulations that limit how many newspapers, broadcast outlets and cable systems any single company can own.

I don't believe this is a wise decision to make. Deregulation could be a devastating blow to the quality of our local news, emergency response systems, local radio programs, independant musicians, and the entertainment industry. In many areas, this new policy could allow a single media company to own all major sources of news information! That would certainly not allow for unbiased information and competitive content. Since the regulations were relaxed in 1996, it is apparent that our radio content has taken an abrupt turn Southward. I've seen the local programming stations in my hometown and elsewhere forced to sell out to one of the few media giants. These stations under new ownership have changed format and dropped local programming without any regard for their local listeners. They have automated playlists repeating the same old songs from the record companies they own themselves. I have heard instances where there have been local emergencies and emergency response officials could not contact a live human being to relay the information to the public. We already have companies controlling a large majority of our media outlets now, and I do not believe this will make for a better diversity of viewpoints. I would hope that the Commission would take a new look at this issue and decide not to ease the regulations that now limit how many media outlets one company can own.